



off the Beaten Path: *A Different Side of Japan*

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10 Nights / 12 Days • 20 Meals (10 Breakfasts, 5 Lunches, 5 Dinners)
Escorted from Honolulu • Includes an English-Speaking Local Guide
March 22 – April 02, 2026 • Tour Manager: Janet Tanaka

OVERVIEW: Okinawa is home to a unique culture that differs considerably from that of mainland Japan. Until the islands were invaded by the Satsuma domain (present day Kagoshima Prefecture) in 1609, Okinawa existed as an entirely separate country from Japan, known as the Ryukyu Kingdom. After the invasion, the Ryukyu Kingdom served as a tributary state to Japan, but continued to be governed by the royal family from Shuri Castle. It was not until 1879, a few years after the Meiji Restoration, that the kingdom was abolished and incorporated into Japan as Okinawa Prefecture. The castles of Okinawa, known as "gusuku" in the Okinawan language, are among the most vivid monuments that testify to the unique cultural and historical heritage of the Ryukyu Kingdom. In the year 2000, five castles and four related sites were designated as UNESCO World Heritage Sites under the collective title of "Gusuku Sites and Related Properties of the Kingdom of Ryukyu."

VISIT: Haneda, Naha, Itoman, Onna, Kitanakagusuku, Nago, Manza, Motobu, Nakijin, Nanjo, Kyoto, Kameoka, Arashiyama & Osaka

TOUR HIGHLIGHTS: Shuri Castle, San-A Naha Main Place, Himeyuri Peace Museum, Okinawa Peace Memorial Park, Mabuni Hill, Ryukyu Mura, AEON MALL Okinawa Rycom, Awamori (Rice Liquor) Factory, Churaumi Aquarium, Nakijin Castle Site, Michi-no-Eki KYODA, Okinawa World, Gyokusendo Stalactite Cave, Habu (Snake) Museum, Glass Factory, Sanjusangen-do, Nijo Castle, Sagano Torokko Resha (Sagano Romantic Train) Ride, Arashiyama Bamboo Forest, Kinkakuji Temple (Golden Pavilion), Kuromon Ichiba Market, Dotonbori Shopping, Shinsaibashi Shopping Arcade, Osaka Castle Park & AEON MALL Rinku Sennan

HANDS-ON EXPERIENCES: Coral Dyeing, Ryusou Ryukyu Kimono Dress-Up, Shisa Painting, Wagashi (Traditional Japanese Sweets) Making & Yuzen Dyeing

UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE SITES: Gusuku Sites and Related Properties of the Kingdom of Ryukyu, Nijo Castle & Kinkakuji Temple (Golden Pavilion)

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Day 1: Sun Mar 22 – HONOLULU. Depart Honolulu via Japan Airlines flt #71 at 4:10 pm.

Day 2: Mon, Mar 23 – HANEDA. Arrive at the Haneda International Airport at 8:10 pm. After entry formalities, walk to your hotel connected to the airport terminal. Enjoy a buffet dinner at the hotel. HOTEL VILLA FONTAINE GRAND HANEDA AIRPORT (1 Night) (D)

Day 3: Tue, Mar 24 – HANEDA – NAHA. After a breakfast buffet at your hotel, transfer back to the Haneda airport terminal. Enjoy a bento box at the domestic departure gate. Depart Haneda Domestic Airport via Japan Airlines flt #915 at 11:55 am and arrive at the Naha Airport at 2:45 pm. Coral is a fundamental part of the history and culture of the Okinawan Islands. Many areas of Okinawa's main island are made of Ryukyu limestone formed by ancient coral reefs several hundred thousand years ago. Today, coral fossils are often used to create various art pieces in Okinawa. Try your hand at bringing your own art to life when you learn how to decorate a tote bag using a **coral dyeing** technique done only in Okinawa, **"ryuzen zome."** Transfer by coach to the hotel in Naha. Take a brief rest before walking to a nearby restaurant for dinner. HOTEL COLLECTIVE (2 Nights) (B, L, D)

Day 4: Wed, Mar 25 – NAHA – ITOMAN – NAHA. After a sumptuous buffet breakfast at your hotel, we embark on a full day of discovery! Visit **Shuri Castle** (Shurijo), the most important castle of the Ryukyu Kingdom, serving both as the central government office and royal residence. Although the main buildings of Shuri Castle were destroyed in a fire in October 2019, reconstruction to bring back the castle to its former glory is expected to be completed in 2026. Shurijo is the only castle in Okinawa that has been reconstructed. Only ruins remain of all the other castles. **Dress-up in Ryusou Ryukyu kimonos** for a group photo! A stop will be made at **San-A Naha Main Place**, the largest shopping mall in Naha, for shopping and lunch (on your own). After lunch, we will visit two WWII memorial sites. Begin by exploring the **Himeyuri Peace Museum**, which details what the Okinawan people experienced – from the atrocities of war, to their struggles during American occupation, and the difficulties they faced with the switching of government powers in the post-war years. The museum also commemorates the fate of the female high school students that had worked in the army field hospitals under horrendous conditions – many of which did not survive the war. Testimonials of the few survivors of the Battle of Okinawa are exhibited here – offering detailed recollections of their painful experiences. Next is the **Okinawa Peace Memorial Park**, situated on **Mabuni Hill**, the site where the Battle of Okinawa ended, was created to mourn the loss of close to a quarter of a million people. One of the key features of the park is the Cornerstone of Peace inscribed with the names of some 200,000 individuals, including civilians and Japanese and foreign soldiers, who lost their lives in the Battle of Okinawa. The concept of the stone monuments is to remember those who died and to pray for them, to share lessons learned from war and to provide a place for meditation and learning. Return to the hotel for an evening of leisure. The Local Guide will have recommendations for nearby dining and shopping opportunities. (B)

*One bag will be kept at the Hotel Collective until your return. Prepare an overnight bag for one night in Manza.

Day 5: Thur, Mar 26 – NAHA – ONNA – KITANAKAGUSUKU – NAGO – MANZA. After breakfast, we head north to Onna and spend the morning at **Ryukyu Mura**, a small theme park about Okinawan culture in the form of a recreated village from the times of the Ryukyu Kingdom. The highlight of the village is the Eisa show. Eisa, a form of folk dance originating in the Okinawa Islands, that is performed by the young people of each community during the bon festival to honor the spirits of their ancestors. In the finale of the Eisa show, visitors can join in on the dance known as **Kachashi**. The term "kachashi" is a word from the Okinawan dialect and means "to mix." It implies the idea of sharing happiness, which fosters a sense of unity that transcends borders and language barriers. Then, stop at **AEON MALL Okinawa Rycom** for shopping and lunch (on own). Next, we visit an **awamori (rice liquor) factory**. Awamori is the signature alcoholic beverage of Okinawa and most of the Ryukyu Islands. Learn the unique process involved in making awamori. Enjoy a buffet dinner at the hotel tonight. ANA INTERCONTINENTAL MANZA BEACH RESORT (1 Night) (B, D)

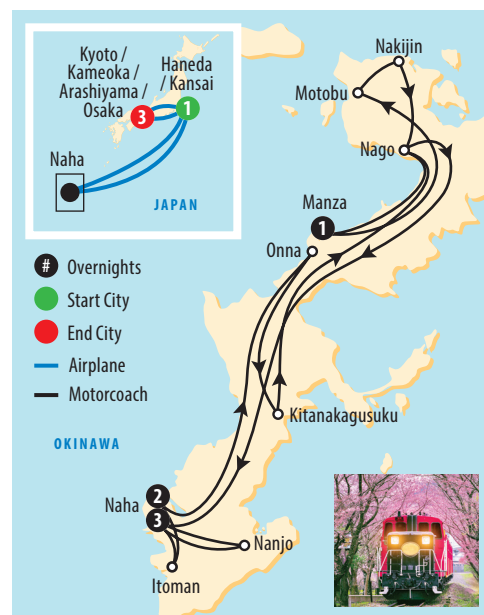
Day 6: Fri, Mar 27 – MANZA – MOTOBU – NAKIJIN – NAGO – NAHA. After an incredible breakfast buffet, enjoy a visit to the **Churaumi Aquarium**, widely considered Japan's best aquarium. It is the main attraction of the Ocean Expo Park on the former grounds of the 1975 International Ocean Expo. The aquarium was completely redesigned and reopened in 2002. The highlight of a visit to the Churaumi Aquarium is the massive **Kuroshio Tank**, one of the largest in the world. The tank takes its name from the warm Kuroshio current which plays a large part in the variety of Okinawa's of marine life. Next, visit the ruins of **Nakijin Castle**. Learn about the history of Okinawa. The castle – a former residence of the Ryukyu Kingdom governor during the 14th century – is a designated UNESCO World Heritage Site. Enjoy lunch at a local restaurant. On the way back to Naha City, stop at the roadside **Michi-no-Eki KYODA** for a chance to stretch the legs and get a little shopping done as well. Not only do they provide a clean and convenient rest stop, but you will find an array of farmer-direct merchandise along with other omiyage items. The remainder of the evening is at your leisure. HOTEL COLLECTIVE (3 Nights) (B, L)

Day 7: Sat, Mar 28 – NAHA. Full day at leisure. This is the perfect opportunity to visit with family and friends. If you haven't gotten enough shopping done yet, don't worry. Your hotel is centrally located on Kokusai-dori, the main shopping street in Naha. Many of the shops and restaurants on the 1.6 kilometers street opens at 10:00 am and remain open until 11:00 pm (or longer). A "not to miss" on Kokusai-dori is the Don Quijote store that is open until 3:00 am every day! It's the perfect location to find souvenirs and omiyage. Shoppers will also enjoy Heiwa-dori, a covered arcade just off of Kokusai-dori. (B)

Day 8: Sun, Mar 29 – NAHA – NANJO – NAHA. Another full day of exploring is ahead! Start the day with a visit to **Okinawa World** a theme park about Okinawan culture. The park's main attractions are a massive natural cave, a craft village, and a **habu (snake) museum**. With a total length of five kilometers, **Gyokusendo Cave** is the longest of the many caves in the south of Okinawa Island and the second longest cave in the entire country. 850 meters of the cave are open to the public and feature spectacular stalactites and stalagmites. The **Kingdom Village** is a nice replica of a traditional Ryukyu village with workshops introducing the various traditional Okinawan crafts, such as weaving, dyeing, paper making, pottery, sugar cane processing, the making of music instruments, and the more recently introduced glass blowing. Colorful **Ryukyu glass** is one of those **must have souvenirs** when visiting Okinawa. Taking a tour of the work shop allows visitors to see how the craftsmen create their art. Hands-on experiences are offered at many of the workshops. Enjoy a buffet lunch while there. You'll then have your chance to **paint your own shisa** – a traditional Ryukyuan cultural artifact derived from Chinese guardian lions, often seen in similar pairs, resembling a cross between a lion and a dog, from Okinawan mythology. Shisas are believed to protect from some evils – with the left shisa traditionally having a closed mouth keeping good spirits in, while the open mouth shisa on the right traditionally wards off evil spirits. This evening, enjoy dinner at a local restaurant. (B, L, D)

Day 9: Mon, Mar 30 – NAHA – KANSAI – KYOTO. This morning we depart Naha and fly to Osaka. Depart the Naha Airport via Japan Transocean Air flt #4 at 11:20 am and arrive at the Kansai Domestic International Airport at 1:15 pm. Transfer to by coach to the hotel in Kyoto. The remainder of the day is at your leisure. A perfect opportunity to explore Kyoto on your own or to fulfill your shopping list. The Local Guide will have suggestions for dinner. DOUBLE TREE BY HILTON KYOTO STATION (3 Nights) (B)

Day 10: Tue, Mar 31 – KYOTO. After a delicious Japanese/Western buffet breakfast at the hotel, embark on a full day of sightseeing beginning with a visit **Sanjusangen-do**, the Buddhist temple famous for its 1,001 statues of Kannon, the goddess of compassion. Next, visit the **Nijo Castle**. After the Tokugawa Shogunate fell in 1867, Nijo Castle was used as an imperial palace for a while before being donated to the city and opened up to the public as a historic site. Its palace buildings are arguably the best surviving examples of castle palace architecture of Japan's feudal era. After lunch,



learn how to make **wagashi**, traditional Japanese sweets. Then take part in another hands-on experience, when you learn how to **surikomi yuzen (brush dyed yuzen)**. Since the patterns are dyed by placing a paper stencil over a tote bag you can make an authentic piece, even if this is your first time. A great souvenir of this trip! Return to the hotel for a Western dinner. (B, L, D)

Day 11: Wed, Apr 01 – KYOTO – KAMEOKA – ARASHIYAMA – KYOTO. After breakfast, travel to Kameoka and board the **Sagano Torokko Ressha (Sagano Romantic Train)** to Arashiyama. Take a stroll around the Arashiyama area and shop for world-famous Arashiyama bamboo products. You may also explore the famous **Arashiyama Bamboo Forests**. After lunch, visit **Kinkakuji Temple (Golden Pavilion)**, a Zen Temple whose top two floors are completely covered in gold leaf. Return to Kyoto, for an evening of leisure. Your Tour Guide will have many suggestions for dinner and shopping (B, L)

Day 12: Thur, Apr 02 – KYOTO – OSAKA – KANSAI – HONOLULU. After hotel checkout, start the day with a visit to **Kuromon Ichiba Market**, a lively covered market which stretches for 580 meters in Osaka's Chuo Ward. The market is famous for its fresh seafood, fruits and vegetables, meats, dried fish, pickles, and confectionery. Many stalls will prepare, cook and serve their food to you right on the spot! An excellent place to stroll, sample, and snack on a delicious variety of fresh market foods. Next, visit **Dotonbori**, one of Osaka's most popular tourist destinations, this street runs parallel to the Dotonbori Canal. It is a popular shopping and entertainment district and is also known as a food destination. Next stop is **Shinsaibashi Shopping Arcade**, Osaka's premier shopping center. Approximately 600 meters long, this area is unique as it combines chain retail stores and trendy boutiques with expensive department stores and top designer fashion labels. You'll have time for shopping and lunch (on your own) here. After lunch, stop at **Osaka Castle Park** for a photo opportunity. Located in the center of Osaka, this vast park includes the Osaka Castle Museum and plenty of spots to enjoy flowers throughout the seasons, including the Nishinomaru Garden, where you can enjoy around 300 cherry trees. One last shopping stop at **AEON MALL Rinku Sennan** before transferring to the airport for the return flight home. Depart the Kansai International Airport via Japan Airlines flt #792 at 10:10 pm and arrive Honolulu at 10:45 am the same day. Aloha and welcome home! (B)

UNESCO World Heritage Sites: Gusuku Sites and Related Properties of the Kingdom of Ryukyu (2000), Nijo Castle (1994), Kinkakuji Temple (1994).

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